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Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Note verbale dated 12 January 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations has the honour to inform the Secretary-General that the Kingdom of Morocco, in its capacity as Chair of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, would like to transmit the following documents to the General Assembly:

(a) Report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Committee on United Nations Affairs (see annex I);

(b) Inter-Parliamentary Union strategy 2012-2017: "Better parliaments, stronger democracies" (see annex II).

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations kindly requests that the present note verbale and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 130.

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Annex I to the note verbale dated 12 January 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

REPORT OF THE IPU COMMITTEE ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

Noted by the 125th IPU Assembly
(Bern, 19 October 2011)

The IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs met from 17 to 19 October 2011 in Bern, Switzerland, during the 125th IPU Assembly. In the context of the growing cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU, the Committee was called upon to play an increasingly important role. As a plenary body in which all IPU Member Parliaments were encouraged to engage, the Committee carried out three key functions: it provides a platform for regular interaction between senior United Nations officials and legislators on major global issues; it offers a space where legislators can review progress in the implementation of international commitments, be they agreements undertaken by United Nations Member States or IPU resolutions adopted by national parliaments; and it provides a framework where legislators can discuss and formulate a parliamentary input to major United Nations processes, such as the current international negotiations on climate change.

The Committee began its first session with a briefing and discussion with Mr. Jorge Sampaio, United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). The session was chaired by Senator D. Dawson of Canada.

Established in 2005 at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, the UNAOC aims to promote greater understanding and cooperation between nations and peoples across cultures and religions, thus countering polarization and extremism. In light of the IPU's core mission as set forth in its Statutes, and in follow-up to its resolution entitled "Ensuring respect for and peaceful co-existence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalized world" (Nusa Dua, 2007), the IPU and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations were developing closer cooperation.

The exchange of views with Mr. Sampaio pointed to the need to enhance the role of parliaments in dealing with popular concerns over culture, identity and migration, which challenged the core values of democracy around the world today. The 127th IPU Assembly in Quebec City in 2012 would focus on "The challenges of citizenship, identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world".

Mr. Sampaio underscored the danger of populism in many societies. In Europe, for example, populist movements were gaining more seats in parliament, which reflected a lack of confidence in the political establishment, striking at the very heart of the European model of democracy. The United Nations Secretary-General, in his inaugural address to the 125th IPU Assembly, had warned that "the biggest challenge is not a deficit of resources, but a deficit of trust. People are losing faith in governments and institutions to do the right things". Restoring trust between citizens and politicians should be a major concern for all legislators.

The Committee stressed that parliaments and parliamentarians should consider various initiatives to enhance intercultural dialogue and cooperation, including the following:

- Organizing regular debates in parliament on issues relating to multiculturalism, cultural diversity, and intercultural dialogue;

- Establishing specific mechanisms to help maintain these issues on the parliamentary agenda, and continuing to take follow-up action with a view to implementing the recommendations of the above-mentioned IPU resolution;

- Playing an active role in the elaboration and implementation of national strategies for intercultural dialogue;

- Joining national delegations to the annual Forums of the UNAOC, such as the forthcoming Global Forum in Doha (11-13 December), which will focus on "Intercultural dialogue to boost development".

The second session took the form of a panel discussion on *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*. The event, chaired by Speaker Harry Jenkins of Australia, was held in follow-up to the IPU resolution entitled "Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: the role of parliaments". This resolution includes many practical recommendations on what parliaments should do to ensure universal ratification of the Treaty, promote the United Nations Secretary-General's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament, and support a number of steps such as reductions in nuclear stockpiles, establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and commencement of negotiations on a fissile materials treaty and a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention.

The Committee heard presentations by renowned public figures, prominent experts and leading parliamentarians, and engaged in a discussion on the new visions, policies and proposals put forward to address the threats and challenges posed by nuclear weapons. It also considered possible roles, responsibilities and action by parliaments and parliamentarians, including regional perspectives and initiatives from Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

The participants deplored the scant attention paid by parliamentarians to this crucial issue. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons outweighed all the possible arguments for maintaining these weapons in the world today. It was irresponsible and unacceptable to work for their abolition after they had been used — whether accidentally, intentionally or by miscalculation. Failure to properly and urgently address this issue was tantamount to crushing the hopes and aspirations and violating the rights of citizens the world over. In addition, the huge financial resources poured into the production of nuclear weapons deprived millions of persons of access to better health care, education and development.

The Committee reaffirmed that all nations had a responsibility to address this issue diligently. Nuclear weapons States had an obligation to implement the commitments they had undertaken through the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which inter alia called for the start of negotiations on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear weapon States could help establish the framework for a nuclear weapons-free world by prohibiting and criminalizing nuclear weapons in their national legislation, establishing regional nuclear weapons-free zones, and promoting common security models as alternatives to nuclear deterrence.

The Committee called on parliamentarians around the world to take action and to promote concrete measures aimed at nuclear disarmament. In support of this process, the IPU was encouraged to develop tools for parliamentarians, including a guide on good practice and model legislation intended to inspire other parliaments. The Committee recommended that the IPU maintain the issue of nuclear disarmament on its agenda and

continue its work in cooperation with partners such as the United Nations, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as with think tanks, non-governmental organizations and parliamentary bodies such as Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).

The Committee devoted its third session to the Istanbul Programme of Action and follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV), held in Istanbul in May 2011. The session was moderated by Mr. T. Melegue, a member of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso, and featured a keynote address by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). The presentations addressed the main outcomes of LDC IV and plans for follow-up, and the important role parliaments had in the achievement of national development commitments, including the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action (IPoA). Participants were briefed on the joint IPU-UNOHRLLS project in support of LDC Parliaments and introduced participants to a Guidance Note developed by the IPU.

The joint project sought to enhance parliaments' contribution to the implementation of the LDC IV decisions, particularly in the areas of good governance and capacity-building. The main purpose of the project was to strengthen the ability of LDC parliaments to establish, monitor, assess, and provide follow-up to the IPoA. The IPU Guidance Note was designed to provide LDC parliaments with guidelines on possible institutional mechanisms for mainstreaming relevant IPoA commitments into their work. It sought to encourage greater involvement by parliaments in the area of development cooperation, and highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of creating dedicated parliamentary committees on the IPoA.

In the ensuing discussion, participants and presenters underscored the vital role of parliaments in the implementation of the IPoA. They agreed that the IPoA provided LDC parliaments with the basis to be involved in major policy decisions. Development-related committees or informal working groups often did not have the resources to do their work properly, but participants recognized that LDCs must pay attention to empowering parliament, and taking charge of their own development. They acknowledged that a greater dissemination of information at the national level was required, emphasizing the need for greater cooperation among LDCs at the regional and subregional levels.

In a separate session held in the afternoon of 17 October, the Committee examined developments in cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU. It heard a presentation by Ms. K. Komi (Finland), a member of the Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs, on the main findings and recommendations of the most recent field mission conducted by the Advisory Group to Ghana and Sierra Leone.

As was the case during previous mission to the United Republic of Tanzania (2008) and Viet Nam (2009), the purpose of the IPU visit was to gather first-hand information on progress made in the One United Nations reform and, more generally, to gain a better understanding of how United Nations country teams engaged with the national parliament. The mission sought to assess the involvement of parliament in the formulation of national development strategies and the oversight of aid, and to identify modalities to address any possible shortcomings. The mission's long-term objective therefore was to help lay the foundations for greater parliamentary involvement in the improved planning and use of development funding.

The Committee held an exchange of views on the various recommendations included in the mission report, which were applicable to many other countries. In order to fully exercise its functions and oversight role, efforts aimed at building parliamentary capacity and providing technical assistance must be pursued. Regional parliamentary organizations were called upon to play a more active role, including as depositories of relevant information and expertise.

The Committee considered that there was greater scope for the United Nations to engage with parliament as a serious partner, not just as a recipient of international assistance, but also — and more importantly — as a major player in the design and implementation of national strategies and plans. While promoting the Delivering as One approach, the United Nations as a system should be prepared to provide clearer guidelines on how United Nations country teams could best engage with national parliaments on various policy issues.

As observed by the IPU field mission and highlighted in the responses to the IPU Survey on how parliaments organize their work vis-à-vis the United Nations system (July 2010), this relationship varies from country to country, depending on a wide range of variables. United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/123 specifically calls for "a regular annual exchange between the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the senior leadership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with a view to building greater coherence in the work of the two organizations, maximizing parliamentary support for the United Nations and helping to forge a strategic partnership between the two organizations". The Committee called for this provision to be acted upon without further delay.

The Committee took stock of preparations for the United Nations General Assembly debate on "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU" — a stand-alone item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its current 66th session. While underscoring the importance of the previous General Assembly resolution (65/123) and the need to further consolidate the gains achieved, it was agreed that there was room for further progress. The Committee encouraged national parliaments to consult on this issue, among themselves and at the national level with their respective foreign ministries, with a view to identifying the main elements of a rich debate at the United Nations and a new and strong General Assembly resolution. It was agreed that the Committee's Advisory Group would further examine this matter at its next meeting, to be held in New York in late November, on the occasion of the 2011 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations.

In the morning of 19 October, the Committee held a panel discussion on the topic "The green economy: A breakthrough for sustainable development?" The debate was held in the context of preparations for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as the Rio+20 Conference. This event, which aims to assess progress in meeting the international commitments on sustainable development adopted by States 20 years ago, was expected to focus on two main themes: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction; and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The panel was moderated by Brazilian MP Hugo Napoleão, and featured a prominent group of parliamentarians, United Nations officials, international experts, and representatives of civil society and the private sector. The participants addressed the different meanings and applications of the "green economy", and its attendant green technologies, as well as questions about the conditions required for the concept to fully encapsulate all three dimensions of sustainable development. They also provided a critical perspective on the green economy, particularly from the standpoint of the following three objectives of the broader sustainable development agenda: changing production and

consumption patterns; decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation; achieving equity, poverty reduction and greater well-being for all.

The concept of sustainable development was often confused with that of environmental sustainability, but sustainable development was actually a broader and more complex construct that rests on the fusion of the environmental (quality), social (equity) and economic (prosperity) dimensions into a single policy approach. The sustainable development agenda relates to both developed and developing countries and by most standards remains today largely unrealized. The economy was using up far more resources than could be replaced or preserved and almost all natural assets — forests, oceans and biodiversity — were threatened at the cost of a lower quality of life, and poverty and inequality persisted in spite of an overall increase in total wealth. Given the direct impact of this reality on the lives of citizens all over the world, parliaments and parliamentarians were called upon to play a proactive role in both national policy-making as well as in the international process leading up to Rio+20.

In its last sitting, the Committee discussed preparations for the 2011 session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 17/CMP 7), to be held in December 2011 in Durban, South Africa. The session was chaired by Mr. Cedric Frolick, coordinator of preparations for the Durban Conference in the South African Parliament. The Committee was briefed on the current negotiations, challenges and requirements for the conclusion of a global agreement on climate policies that encompassed adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, forests and capacity-building. The Committee exchanged views on a draft parliamentary message to the United Nations Conference, which should be a succinct but powerful political declaration for both governments and parliaments.

Annex II to the note verbale dated 12 January 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

BETTER PARLIAMENTS, STRONGER DEMOCRACIES

IPU STRATEGY 2012-2017

Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 189th session

(Bern, 19 October 2011)

Introduction

The present document contains a strategy for the IPU for the coming five years. It charts a course for the organization's development in three strategic directions, spells out the corresponding objectives and identifies what it hopes to have achieved by the end of the five years.

The document starts by presenting a new mission statement. The statement encapsulates the mission of the IPU in a few words. It is accompanied by an explanation and a slogan.

The mission statement is followed by a vision. The vision expresses where the IPU wants to be in the longer term. It reflects an overall ambitious view of the IPU's future. It aims to rally all stakeholders around a common general aspiration.

Then there are three strategic directions that chart a path for the IPU over the next five years towards the fulfilment of its vision. The strategic directions are inferred from the mission statement. They give priority to three areas of work: democracy and parliaments, international involvement of parliaments and the IPU as an instrument of parliamentary cooperation.

The three strategic directions are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Parliamentary cooperation is at the centre. It underpins all of the IPU's work. Each strategic direction is composed of three objectives and several sub-objectives.

BETTER PARLIAMENTS, STRONGER DEMOCRACIES
GREATER INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT OF PARLIAMENTS
THE IPU AS A MORE EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

The strategy will guide the IPU over the coming five years. A mid-term review of the strategy will take place after two years.

The strategy will be implemented on the basis of priorities. All actions reflected in the plan cannot be done immediately, at the same time, and during the full five-year period. Some are time-bound, others will depend on demand and others still will need to wait pending the identification of resources.

The strategy is not a business plan nor is it a budget document. Nonetheless, it has been drawn up with current economic realities in mind. It will need to be translated into a separate annual or bi-annual work plan and budget. The budget will correlate to a level of income that corresponds to what Members are able to contribute and other revenues the IPU can realistically hope to obtain.

The strategy is based on a careful analysis of the IPU today, the environment in which it operates, the challenges it faces and, most importantly, its considerable comparative advantages. It has been enriched by observations and suggestions from many Member Parliaments, geo-political groups and IPU Committees and has been meticulously worked on by the Executive Committee.

The strategy will provide clarity, focus and understanding within and outside the IPU regarding its future direction and make it possible to plan resources and action.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission statement	• The IPU, the world organization of parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and action. It advances democracy and assists parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to fulfil their mandates.
Vision	• To be universal, dynamic and effective in order to advance democratic culture, values and institutions, as well as the rule of law, through cooperation among parliaments. • To assist parliaments and parliamentarians in all parts of the world to articulate and respond effectively to the needs of the people and their aspirations for peace, human rights, gender equality and development. • To be acknowledged and supported by Member Parliaments in providing a parliamentary dimension in international fora, including the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.
Strategic direction 1 Objectives	• Better parliaments, stronger democracies • Strengthen democracy through parliaments • Advance gender equality • Protect and promote human rights

Strategic direction 2 Objectives	• More international involvement of parliaments • Develop a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions • Build parliamentary support for international development goals • Contribute to peace-building and conflict prevention
Strategic direction 3 Objectives	• The IPU as a more effective instrument of parliamentary cooperation • Achieve universal membership and strengthen engagement with Members • Enhance the IPU's visibility through a modern communications strategy • Improve operational management, governance and internal oversight

WHY A STRATEGY FOR THE IPU?

The IPU has an extraordinarily rich past. It has made major contributions to peace and cooperation. It has facilitated dialogue and understanding across political divides. It has been at the forefront of parliamentary developments and has helped parliaments everywhere cope with globalization and an increasingly inter-dependent world.

Today it is the world's only global forum for parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. It has developed unequalled knowledge and expertise on the role, structure and working methods of national parliaments and it is an effective spokesperson for parliaments at the international level.

Like all organizations dedicated to international cooperation, the IPU faces a number of challenges as it adapts to the realities of the 21st century.

Parliaments in many countries need strengthening to be able to deal effectively with today's agenda. This includes adapting to the realities of globalization and creating capacity in parliament to assume a more active role in relation to international cooperation and multilateral institutions.

As more attention is being devoted by governments and international organizations to strengthening national parliaments, there is a need for greater clarity and support from them for IPU's work in favour of democratic parliaments.

The IPU as an institution must have a clearer profile. It urgently needs to implement a communications strategy, to demonstrate that it has confidence in itself, in what it is and what it wants to do. A comprehensive strategy that charts the course for its development in the next five years will encapsulate that confidence and serve to garner resources and support for the accomplishment of its objectives.

Ultimately, the strategy will help Members build an IPU that is universal, dynamic and effective and able to advance democratic culture, values and institutions through cooperation among parliaments.

MISSION STATEMENT

- The IPU, the world organization of parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and action. It advances democracy and assists parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to fulfil their mandates.

The IPU facilitates political parliamentary debate, dialogue and cooperation. It promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law. It develops standards, disseminates information on good practices and helps build parliamentary capacity and efficacy. It defends the human rights of members of parliament and promotes respect for universal values, norms and principles. It works in support of gender equality and the participation of women, minorities and indigenous peoples in political and public life. It assists parliaments in coping with a growing international agenda and in contributing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and similar multilateral institutions.

In short, the IPU stands for: *Better parliaments, stronger democracies*.

VISION

- To be universal, dynamic and effective in order to advance democratic culture, values and institutions, as well as the rule of law, through cooperation among parliaments.
- To assist parliaments and parliamentarians in all parts of the world to articulate and respond effectively to the needs of the people and their aspirations for peace, human rights, gender equality and development.
- To be acknowledged and supported by Member Parliaments in providing a parliamentary dimension in international fora, including the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. BETTER PARLIAMENTS, STRONGER DEMOCRACIES

The IPU holds that better parliaments make stronger democracies. The organization has a clear comparative advantage through its parliamentary membership and the work it has carried out over the years to strengthen parliaments, advance gender equality and protect and promote human rights. The IPU's work is focused on parliament, which acts as both a provider and recipient of assistance and as an agent for change. Over the next five years — 2012 to 2017 — the IPU will work with the support of its Member Parliaments to advance three priority objectives: strengthen democracy through parliaments, advance gender equality and protect and promote human rights.

Objective 1.1	**Strengthen democracy through parliaments**

Parliaments are the cornerstone of democracy. They need to be empowered and have the requisite means to carry out their constitutional functions. They must embody core democratic values in their work. The IPU's strategy consists of strengthening parliaments to enable them to contribute to democracy and help meet the aspirations of the people. The IPU pursues an integrated approach: it develops different kinds of tools and applies them to priority thematic areas of work. Parliaments are central to the development and implementation of all activities.

Work area: Information and research — **Sub-objective: Consolidate the IPU as a global resource on parliament and democracy**

The IPU will update and develop the PARLINE database on national parliaments. It will publish a *Global Parliamentary Report* on the state of the world's parliaments on a

regular basis. It will establish a new publishing programme focusing on good practices in parliaments and new and emerging topics in parliamentary development. Thematic activities will include ensuring that parliaments are inclusive of minorities and indigenous people as well as other marginalized sectors of society; encouraging youth participation in the democratic process; promoting the effective use of ICT in parliament; and promoting the International Day of Democracy as an opportunity for parliaments to engage with citizens. The IPU will support the development and consolidation of professional networks for the exchange of information among parliaments. Information and research feeds the IPU's work on standard-setting and technical assistance.

Work area: Standards and guidelines — **Sub-objective: Encourage recognition and implementation of standards for democratic parliaments**

The IPU will promote its criteria for democratic parliaments as outlined in *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice*. The IPU will encourage parliaments to assess their performance based on these criteria, and will create a mechanism for reviewing parliamentary performance on a voluntary basis, including through peer reviews. It will continue to provide a parliamentary dimension to the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and will work towards its rapprochement with a similar mechanism in the Community of Democracies. It will develop new standards and guidelines for good practice in parliaments as and when the need arises.

Work area: Technical assistance — **Sub-objective: Strengthen parliaments by providing tailored advice and programmes of assistance**

The IPU will continue to provide advisory services and technical assistance to strengthen parliaments. It will systematically seek to improve the delivery and impact of technical assistance, providing better coordinated and more efficient services to parliaments. It will focus its attention on parliaments in countries emerging from conflict or in transition towards democracy. It will continue to build parliamentary capacity to address key human rights and gender concerns as well as other issues on the global agenda. It will support parliaments' capacity to hold government to account, strengthen their budget and audit functions, enhance transparency and combat corruption. It will strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations that work to enhance parliamentary development. Technical assistance is underpinned by the IPU's work on research and standards, and lessons learned from technical assistance programmes are fed back into this work.

Objective 1.2 Advance gender equality

Gender equality is a key component of better parliaments. The IPU pursues a strategy that focuses on monitoring and providing support for women's participation in politics, building the capacity of IPU Member Parliaments and assisting parliaments in their gender-related tasks. Activities in this area will build on the parliamentary work of IPU Member Parliaments, the contribution of both men and women, the expertise of former members of parliament and contributions of international partner organizations, including UN-Women.

Work area: Information and research

Sub-objective: Maintain its position as a global reference point for women in politics

The IPU will continue to collect up-to-date information on women's participation in politics. It will undertake research and produce statistics, surveys and reports through online databases (on quotas and statistics on women), websites and the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOWPolitics). It will develop new indicators on women's participation in politics, provide an analysis of emerging issues or trends and specific gender concerns. It will provide information and training materials tailored to the needs of newly elected women parliamentarians.

Work area: Access to and participation in parliament

Sub-objective: Develop national strategies to facilitate women's access to parliament and support women MPs' participation in policy-making

The IPU will help strengthen national frameworks to facilitate women's access to parliament by reviewing legal frameworks that impact on women in politics. The IPU will continue to provide technical assistance and training to women MPs. The programme will incorporate building the capacity of women through the use of ICTs and developing mentorships for newly elected women MPs.

Work area: Gender mainstreaming

Sub-objective: Foster gender-sensitive change in parliament

The IPU has produced the first ever global analysis on gender mainstreaming in parliament and gender-sensitive parliaments. It has mapped the current situation and identified good practices. The IPU will work to develop standards and issue guidelines on gender-sensitive policies and procedures. It will provide capacity-building support to parliamentary bodies that deal with gender equality and women's issues. It will help members of parliament and parliamentary staff to build their capacities in gender mainstreaming and will facilitate the exchange of good practices.

Work area: Respect for women's rights

Sub-objective: Assist parliaments in amending discriminatory laws and strengthening their capacity to address violence against women

The IPU will continue to support parliaments in enhancing their oversight over the governments for effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and taking action on violence against women — two key gender and societal concerns. It will continue capacity building with member parliaments to enhance their supervision of the CEDAW reporting process by governments and will focus on discriminatory legislation. With regard to violence against women, it will pay greater attention to legislative reform and strengthening parliamentary oversight to ensure enforcement of legislation. Activities will be directed at building parliamentary capacity. The IPU will provide legislative counselling and policy advice. In all activities, the IPU will ensure that male parliamentarians and parliamentary staff are involved and that men and women work together on gender-related matters. The activities will also consolidate bridges and enhance cooperation between MPs, government agencies, United Nations agencies working on gender, civil society organizations, constituents, media and research centres.

Objective 1.3 Protect and promote human rights

Parliaments and their members are "guardians" of human rights by virtue of their essential legislative and oversight responsibilities to ensure respect for human rights. The IPU helps parliaments assume these responsibilities by protecting the rights of their members and providing them with information, knowledge and training to enable them to take an active part in human rights promotion and protection. Over the next five years, the IPU will bolster these efforts by focusing on the following four priorities:

Work area: IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Sub-objective: Enhance the capacity of the IPU Committee to address human rights abuses

The IPU will strengthen the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and will explore new ways to encourage Member Parliaments to take an active part in helping resolve the cases brought to the attention of the IPU Governing Council. As appropriate, more work will be undertaken to inform and promote concerted action with United Nations mechanisms and the human rights community at large in support of the Committee's work. The Committee will examine action that can be taken to prevent recurrent and cross-cutting concerns in its case-work with a view to helping prevent new violations. It will pay particular attention to how women parliamentarians are affected by human rights abuses.

Work area: Capacity-building

Sub-objective: Strengthen the contribution of parliaments to human rights promotion and protection

The IPU will continue to heighten awareness about the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It will focus on the role of parliaments in their implementation. As appropriate, it will help ensure that the parliaments of those countries whose national reports are due for examination by the main United Nations human rights committees and the Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review are involved in preparing the reports, are represented in the delegations presenting them, and subsequently help implement their recommendations. The IPU will work more closely with the United Nations human rights monitoring system and will provide assistance to parliaments wishing to become more involved in it. Work in this area will help identify if and where there is a need for IPU publications in the area of human rights.

Work area: Children's rights

Sub-objective: Help parliaments ensure respect for children's rights

The IPU will raise awareness in parliaments on rights issues and help build their capacity to promote children's rights. Although children are active holders of rights, they often lack the means to ensure respect for them, which is why it is all the more important for parliaments to help ensure such respect. The IPU will focus on strengthening parliaments' involvement in the work of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, building the oversight capacity of parliaments to ensure implementation of legislation on children's rights and supporting child participation in parliaments.

Work area: International humanitarian law	Sub-objective: Promote ratification and implementation of selected humanitarian law conventions

The IPU will focus, through the work of its Committee to promote respect for international humanitarian law, on increasing the ratification and implementation of a selected number of conventions in the area of international humanitarian law. More attention will be paid to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

2. GREATER INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT OF PARLIAMENTS

Greater international involvement of parliaments is necessary to help bridge the democracy deficit in international relations. In today's globalized and interconnected world, a more robust parliamentary engagement internationally is desirable to identify possible solutions to major global issues and work towards their implementation. The IPU will continue to develop a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation, endeavour to enhance the transparency and accountability of global processes and mobilize parliamentary action on major global challenges.

Objective 2.1	Develop a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions

The IPU pursues a strategy of mobilizing parliaments around today's major global issues and assisting them as they as they guide governments and hold them to account in implementing corresponding multilateral agreements. The IPU works closely with the United Nations, which reaches out to national parliaments through the IPU. The IPU provides a parliamentary input to the work of the United Nations, as well as the beginnings of parliamentary oversight and accountability. The IPU is establishing a strategic partnership with the United Nations and is seeking to develop similar relationships with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Work area: Cooperation with the United Nations	Sub-objective: Enhance the parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations

The IPU will continue to provide parliamentary input to the work of the United Nations and seek to have a parliamentary perspective reflected in the latter's decisions. It will convene legislators around the main global issues under consideration by the United Nations. It will encourage the more systematic participation of legislators in national delegations to major United Nations conferences and events and promote a more uniform approach by the United Nations system to national parliaments. It will work with the United Nations towards mobilizing greater support by the international community for building the capacity of parliaments worldwide. The IPU will work with the United Nations in search of a more coherent framework for cooperation and coordination between the two independent institutions. It will work to build support by United Nations Member States for a new cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU to replace the outdated 1996 agreement.

Work area: New United Nations bodies and major United Nations processes	Sub-objective: Develop a strong parliamentary component to the work of the new United Nations bodies and major United Nations processes

The IPU will continue to make a parliamentary contribution to the work of the three United Nations bodies set up in 2005 — the Peacebuilding Commission, the Development Cooperation Forum, and the Human Rights Council — as proposed by the United Nations General Assembly. The IPU will also continue to organize parliamentary meetings in the margins of major United Nations conferences and processes. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly formally decided to engage more systematically with the IPU in integrating a parliamentary component of and contribution to major United Nations deliberative processes and the review of international commitments. The IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs will assist in developing the IPU's response to this decision.

Work area: WTO and international trade	Sub-objective: Strengthen the parliamentary dimension to the work of the WTO and, more generally, on matters of international trade

The IPU will continue its work with the European Parliament, in cooperation with national parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies, aimed at providing a parliamentary dimension to the WTO. It will work to build capacity in parliament to monitor WTO activities, maintain dialogue with governmental negotiators, facilitate exchange of information and experiences, and exert a growing parliamentary influence on the direction of discussions and negotiations within the WTO. The IPU will also continue its cooperation with other multilateral institutions working in the field of trade and development, in particular the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Work area: Global economic governance	Sub-objective: Strengthen parliamentary action on economic and financial issues

The global economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2008 has highlighted the need for a fundamental review and reform of regulatory frameworks and economic policies. The IPU will continue to promote parliamentary debate and action on these issues. It will start promoting greater parliamentary accountability of the Bretton Woods Institutions by pursuing three broad objectives: enhancing the legal authority of parliaments to approve World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans; strengthening the role of parliaments in the adoption of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and related plans; and increasing the input of parliaments into new global policies designed by the World Bank/IMF, the United Nations and the G20.

Objective 2.2	Build parliamentary support for international development goals

Parliaments have an essential role to play in eradicating poverty and achieving development. Members of parliament can ensure that development plans are informed by the people's priorities, speak on behalf of the poor and other marginalized and vulnerable groups, and ensure national ownership of development policies and programmes. The IPU strategy aims to assist parliaments in achieving this in a few targeted areas linked to the internationally agreed development commitments, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The strategy will focus on helping parliaments develop stronger oversight tools to monitor all of the MDGs, review their own institutional

processes, and identify the optimal institutional set-up to mainstream the MDGs into their work.

Work area: Maternal, neonatal and child health

Sub-objective: Help parliaments influence maternal, neonatal and child health policies and programmes

The IPU aims to increase the influence of national parliaments on maternal, neonatal and child health. In support of this broad goal, the IPU will raise awareness among parliaments and support the emergence and implementation of related parliamentary action plans. Support for parliamentary action will include providing parliaments with the skills required to develop appropriate legislation, set appropriate budget levels for improved health, and ensure availability and accessibility of adequate and equitable services and the accountability of central government for the delivery of these elements. Other approaches will include knowledge creation and awareness raising regarding the work of parliaments in these areas, as well as strengthening linkages between national, regional and global processes or platforms critical to maternal, neonatal and child health.

Work area: HIV/AIDS

Sub-objective: Provide global leadership for parliamentary work on HIV/AIDS

The IPU will promote parliamentary action in support of the commitments contained in the June 2011 General Assembly Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS and in United Nations Security Council resolution 1983 (2011). This will include enhancing parliamentary leadership and oversight for the HIV response, budgetary allocations and law-making that supports universal access to HIV services and prevents discrimination against people living with or affected by HIV. The IPU will continue to lead the global parliamentary dialogue on the epidemic, with its Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS providing a global parliamentary focal point. The IPU will continue to work closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, to help build parliamentary capacity and channel parliamentary input to international processes for the global AIDS response.

Work area: Development aid

Sub-objective: Help parliaments ensure greater aid effectiveness

The IPU has carried out several case studies in support of international commitments to achieve aid effectiveness (Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda and Busan outcome). The IPU will carry this work forward through dialogue among parliamentarians, helping parliaments to achieve the following key objectives: include parliaments in the decision-making structures set up between donors and the executive in aid-recipient countries; improve parliaments' access to information on aid flows and modalities; build the capacity of parliamentarians and relevant staff to analyse annual budgets and other related documents; and strengthen parliaments' capacity to influence and monitor aid policies.

Work area: Least developed countries (LDCs)

Sub-objective: Mobilize support for implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action

The IPU will follow up on the Parliamentary Forum it held at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV). It will support parliaments in implementing the 2011-2020 Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the LDCs adopted by that conference. The IPU will raise awareness in parliaments and promote their engagement in the LDC process. It will work to strengthen the parliamentary focal point mechanism and support the creation of a Parliamentary Plan of Action for

parliamentary engagement. To facilitate LDC parliaments' involvement in development issues, the IPU will highlight the links between the IPoA and the achievement of the MDGs.

Work area: Climate change | **Sub-objective: Strengthen parliamentary action on climate change**

The IPU will continue to set up a parliamentary process to accompany the global climate change negotiations. It will complement this work by promoting action by parliaments to integrate climate change and its consequences into their own agenda and work programme by elaborating and approving national climate-related budgets and implementing legislation. The IPU will also promote action by parliaments to reduce their own carbon footprint.

Objective 2.3 Contribute to peace-building and conflict prevention

A parliament that represents all sectors of society and has the requisite powers and means to legislate and hold government to account makes an enormous contribution towards peace and stability. That is why the work the IPU carries out to build better parliaments and stronger democracies is in itself a contribution to peace-building and conflict prevention. The IPU also provides support to parliaments in countries facing or emerging from conflict or under foreign occupation. These activities are often part of IPU's work in cooperation with the United Nations and its Peace-building Commission. They include targeted action to facilitate political reconciliation through parliaments in post-conflict situations and parliamentary diplomacy. In all instances they are complementary to efforts undertaken by other actors, focus on the parliaments, respond to their requests for support and rely on the political support of IPU Member Parliaments.

Work area: Political reconciliation in post-conflict situations | **Sub-objective: Help parliaments become more open to dialogue and inclusive so that they can facilitate reconciliation and security sector governance**

The IPU will continue to provide targeted support to parliaments in post-conflict countries by promoting dialogue within parliament and helping it contribute to national reconciliation and security sector governance. The implementation of these activities will entail capacity-building and advisory services and will draw on the expertise of IPU Member Parliaments and the knowledge of partner organizations directly involved in peace-building. The activities will be results-oriented and based on parliamentary action plans, with the parliaments committing themselves to progressive implementation. The IPU's advisory services will cater to the needs of each parliament, but will focus on ensuring smooth relations with the executive and on codifying the role and rights of the opposition as a means of soothing tensions within and outside parliament.

Work area: Parliamentary diplomacy | **Sub-objective: Facilitate conflict resolution through parliamentary diplomacy**

The IPU offers a privileged space for parliamentary diplomacy. It is a natural and neutral venue for members of parliament from different countries and political factions to exchange views and experiences and discuss conflicts within and between countries. The IPU intends to put this resource more systematically to good use. When internal crises seriously affect or bring national parliamentary business to a halt, the IPU will offer its good offices to help defuse tensions and promote dialogue. Rapid resort to parliamentary

diplomacy may subsequently help identify longer-term needs for capacity-building and advisory services. Similar efforts will be made in regional conflicts where the IPU may have an advantage through its membership. Such involvement would be largely modelled on the work of the Committee on Middle East Questions, which should be strengthened, but in contrast would be time-bound and more flexible and informal in nature. The idea is not to systematically put in place formal structures such as ad hoc committees, which would require substantial additional resources.

3. THE IPU AS A MORE EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

The IPU's Strategy for 2012–2017 contains an internal dimension; turning the IPU into a more effective instrument of parliamentary cooperation. It represents a strategic direction for the IPU's development over the next five years because it underpins much of what the IPU hopes to achieve. In order to be able to provide more incisive support to parliaments and assist them in developing their international involvement, the IPU must also improve itself. The following three objectives have been identified:

Objective 3.1 Achieve universal membership and enhance relations with Members

The IPU is a unique global forum for parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. Over the past 10 years, it has modernized its structures, adapting them more closely to those employed by parliaments. For the next five years, the organization needs to bring this process forward in four interrelated areas: making the organization more universal, improving on parliament's participation in IPU meetings, including from a political and gender perspective, making the annual assemblies more effective and better able to meet the demands of its Members, and facilitating greater coherence in parliamentary cooperation.

Work area: Membership — **Sub-objective: Advance towards universal membership**

The IPU will make every effort to achieve universal membership. It will focus on parliaments of small island States in the Caribbean and in the South Pacific. It will pursue efforts to encourage other parliaments that are not yet Members to join, including parliaments in countries that have recently emerged from conflict.

Work area: Participation in activities — **Sub-objective: Strengthen the participation of parliaments in the work of the IPU**

The IPU will encourage parliaments to include in their delegations to IPU meetings members of parliamentary committees dealing with the subject matters that are placed on the IPU's agenda. The knowledge and experience of these MPs can help enrich the discussion for the benefit of all participants; they can put the outcome of those discussions to direct use in their respective committees in parliament; and they can ensure follow-up and implementation of IPU recommendations.

Work area: Parliamentary representation

Sub-objective: Formulate guidelines on gender and political balance in parliamentary delegations

The IPU will assess the existing directives concerning gender balance in parliamentary delegations with a view to further increasing the participation of women parliamentarians. It will develop guidelines for ensuring political balance in delegations attending IPU meetings. The guidelines will seek to encourage better representation of the main political factions in parliament while respecting the basic tenet that all parliaments are sovereign in deciding on the composition of their delegations. The IPU will also examine possible avenues for encouraging better participation of youth.

Work area: Structures and working methods

Sub-objective: Improve IPU structures and working methods

The IPU will continue to strengthen the Assembly and its Standing Committees. It will provide induction material for new participants in IPU activities. It will seek to secure greater support for and participation in the work of the Standing Committees by Member Parliaments, with better preparation, participation in debates and follow-up of outcomes. It will assess the contribution of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians and the Gender Partnership Group to advancing gender equality issues with the objective of ensuring more interactive exchanges, greater participation of men and more gender-focused debates. The IPU will include the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians in its Statutes, thereby making it a statutory body. It will issue guidelines to ensure that members are elected on the basis of their capacity to participate effectively in the Committee's work.

Work area: Monitoring implementation

Sub-objective: Ensure better follow-up and implementation of decisions and recommendations adopted by the IPU

The IPU will further improve the existing reporting exercise. It will systematically examine how the content of IPU resolutions can be integrated into the regular programme of work. It will consider what action it can take to help Member Parliaments to follow up on these resolutions. As many of these resolutions contain recommendations to parliaments to ensure implementation of major international conventions, agreements and decisions, the IPU will pay special attention to action to encourage parliamentary implementation of those recommendations.

Work area: Parliamentary cooperation

Sub-objective: Seek greater coherence in global parliamentary cooperation

The IPU will continue to monitor the development of parliamentary cooperation through different formal and informal structures. It will explore avenues for ensuring greater cooperation and a sharing of agendas and experiences with global and regional parliamentary assemblies and organizations.

Objective 3.2 Enhance the IPU's visibility through a modern communications strategy

The IPU needs a communications policy that supports the three strategic directions. It must generate and capitalize on opportunities to publicize the work of parliaments, parliamentarians and the IPU in order to entrench a public perception of the IPU as a unique organization that belongs to parliaments and strives to advance democracy. Putting into effect such a policy will require a re-thinking of how the IPU goes about

communicating with the rest of the world. The policy will seek vigorous outreach towards parliaments. It will entail achieving much more direct communication with members of parliament and publicizing their work both in parliament and at the IPU. It will require significant focus on the organization's website, streamlining its publications and re-orienting its media relations.

Work area: Website

Sub-objective: Modernize the IPU's website and turn it into a dynamic resource for two-way communication with the global parliamentary community

The IPU website will get a new face. It will primarily be about national parliaments and individual parliamentarians, but it must also become the support tool for a knowledge base, a source of information that is unique. It will build on (and reflect) the substantial body of work carried out by the IPU and its Members, in particular the work carried out to strengthen democracy through parliaments, advance gender equality and protect and promote human rights. It must be the reference point for anyone wanting to know about parliaments, from the basics of how they work and what they do, to advanced academic commentary on politics. It must become a site for appealing and digestible data on legislatures in general, trends, changes and innovations, and broader patterns of attitudes to democracy and the nuts and bolts of the machinery that sustains it. In so doing, it will build the recognition that the IPU currently lacks. It will be a tool for communicating with and between parliaments and their members as well as with a broader public. It will be complemented by greater use of the social media.

Work area: Information products

Sub-objective: Create modern information products that meet the needs of Member Parliaments

The IPU will establish a publications policy. It will focus on producing information products that meet the needs of Member Parliaments. It will aim to become a leader in parliamentary information products. It will streamline and, as appropriate, discontinue some publications while launching others. It will develop a major annual report — The Global Parliamentary Report — as a flagship publication for the IPU that will become a primary reference tool on parliaments, their members, and the challenges they face (see section I.1 above). It will produce video materials on the IPU. Specific attention will be given to enhancing the user-friendliness of products, ensuring greater publicity and follow-up and producing versions in Spanish and Arabic.

Work area: Media

Sub-objective: Reorient the IPU's media policy towards outreach

The IPU will continue to network with journalists and correspondents while aiming for greater specialization among those interested in parliamentary politics or particular aspects of the Organization's work. The media policy objective will be to place articles reflecting the work and opinions of the IPU within leading newspapers and secure TV coverage for IPU activities. The IPU will continue to explore options for content-sharing among parliamentary TV channels, the aim being to manufacture an IPU-branded product.

Objective 3.3 Improve operational management, governance and internal oversight

Providing better services to its Members will require modernizing the way the IPU operates. This will entail mainstreaming gender throughout the organization, its policies, programmes and activities. It will also involve ensuring a rights-based approach to all IPU work. Modernization requires reviewing key business practices that impact on cost effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. The IPU will upgrade its management systems and procedures, in particular in the area of human resources, financial systems and communications. The current challenges faced by the IPU to better serve its Members require a faster response time and flexibility, particularly in the area of communications and finance. The IPU will need to discontinue some functions and establish new ones.

Work area: Gender mainstreaming **Sub-objective: Ensure that gender is systematically mainstreamed throughout the IPU**

The IPU will develop a gender mainstreaming policy and will apply it throughout the organization. Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. It makes political and development agendas more relevant and effective; acknowledging gender inequalities and addressing them will strengthen the effectiveness of any policy, programme and action. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities — policy development, research, advocacy, dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

Work area: Rights-based approach **Sub-objective: Introduce a rights-based approach in all IPU activities**

The IPU will introduce a rights-based approach to its work. A rights-based approach is a means of protecting and empowering human beings and enhancing the capacity and accountability of public institutions — including parliament — that have an obligation to ensure the respect, promotion and fulfilment of their rights. By introducing a rights-based approach in all its work areas, the IPU will contribute to enhancing the capacity of parliaments to promote and protect human rights.

Work area: Management action plan **Sub-objective: Upgrade IPU management systems and procedures and implement a results-based management system**

The IPU will put in place a real-time financial system to increase the operational efficiency of budget holders. Directors and staff will receive training on planning, budgeting and financial management to make the best use of financial systems. More systematic evaluation of projects and programmes will be carried out. The IPU will implement a results-based management system. The performance evaluation system for staff will be enhanced. The IPU will start integrating modern ICTs throughout its operations. ICT support systems will be put in place where none have existed so far. Databases of contacts will increasingly become a vital support for communications outreach. The IPU will start making more systematic use of video conferencing and facilitate virtual meetings. This will eventually require upgrading the IPU's conference facilities to make "virtual" parliamentary cooperation possible. The IPU will invest in staff training and improve human resources processes.

Work area: Governance and oversight **Sub-objective: Strengthen internal governance and oversight**

With the help of a sub-committee on finance made up of members designated from within the Executive Committee, the IPU will ensure better internal governance and oversight. It will build on best practices in international organizations and will aim to provide expert advice on all financial and risk matters affecting the IPU, oversee the budget and its implementation and assist the Executive Committee in applying and implementing the decisions of the Governing Council on the financial management of the IPU. It will also establish a resource mobilization strategy to ensure that the IPU can count on predictable and stable resources to carry out its work.

CONCLUSION

The IPU is an organization of parliaments. The strategy outlined in this document should help the Members build an IPU that is universal, dynamic and effective and able to advance democratic culture, values and institutions through cooperation among parliaments.

The Members wish to bolster the political impact of the IPU within their Parliaments, within individual countries and worldwide. They seek to reinforce the work of the IPU in support of parliaments and of democracy. Better parliaments make for stronger democracies. The IPU will work to strengthen democracy through parliaments, advance gender equality and protect and promote human rights.

The strategy suggests that the membership can achieve this by intensifying parliamentary cooperation through the IPU. In all three strategic directions, parliaments and their members are the principal actors.

The strategy will be put into effect through selected activities set out in the annual programme of work and its consolidated budget. To a large extent, they will be financed through the core budget. The level of funding through Members' contributions will not increase for the period covered by the strategy. Voluntary funding will have to be found to implement additional activities that are not funded by the core budget.

In its very essence, the strategy seeks to render more effective Member Parliaments' participation in the work of the IPU and their ownership of the organization.